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*The Cross of CHRIST, the  
Christian's Glory.*

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A  
S E R M O N

*693.d.17*  
*4*

Preached at the  
V I S I T A T I O N

O F  
The Rev. JOHN BROWNE, D.D.  
ARCHDEACON of *Peterborough.*

H E L D  
In *All Saints Church*, in *Northampton*,  
On *May 10th*, 1753.

By JAMES HERVEY, A. M.  
Rector of *Weston-Favell.*

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The Book of CHRIST  
Christmas's Gospel

# SERMON

ON

THE BIRTH OF JOHN BOWEN

IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY

ON MONDAY

BY JAMES HETVEL, A.M.  
Rector of St. Mary's

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G A L. vi. 14.

*God forbid, that I should glory,  
save in the Cross of our LORD  
JESUS CHRIST.*

**T**HE Cross of Christ was the favourite Subject of St. *Paul's* Contemplation. At all Times, and in every Capacity, he professed, he avowed, he *gloried* in, the Cross of CHRIST—Nay, what is very remarkable, he gloried in *nothing* else—And, what is still more observable, he *abhorred* the Thought of glorying in any thing else. He speaks of such a Practice, in the Language of Detestation and Dread ; accounting it a high

B                      Degree



Degree both of Folly and of Wickedness: *God forbid, &c.*

It may, therefore, be an Employ worthy of our present Attention, to enquire into the *Nature*, the *Reasonableness*, and the *Wisdom*, of this Resolution. All which, I hope, will appear, if we consider,

1<sup>st</sup>, In what the Apostle would *not* glory.

2<sup>dly</sup>, In what he *did* glory.

3<sup>dly</sup>, What *Reason* he had, to glory in the Cross of CHRIST.

These Points being briefly dispatched, I shall beg Leave to add a Word of *Application*; suggested by the Tenour of the Discourse, and adapted to the Circumstances of my several Hearers. And may that adorable Jesus, who has exchanged his Cross for an heavenly Crown, accompany all with his *divine Blessing*! — Let us then enquire, 1<sup>st</sup>, In what the Apostle did



did *not* glory?—Not in the *Greatness* of his *Learning*, as a Scholar. He was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*: Was educated by the most famous Tutor of the Age. Nor was his Genius, or his Industry, inferior to the other Advantages of his Education. Yet all these Advantages, with their correspondent Acquisitions, he accounted no better than pompous Ignorance, or refined Folly,

Not in the *Strictness* of his *Life*, as a Jew. In this respect, he profited above his Equals: *Was taught according to the perfect Manner of the Law of the Fathers\**; after the *straitest* Sect of their Religion he lived a *Pharisee*†: Was zealous, exceedingly zealous, of the whole ceremonial Law, and of all the traditional Constitutions. Which Accomplishments must finish his Character among his Countrymen; must open his Way to some of the first Honours of the Nation; and give him a Name among those Worthies, who are reputed *the Excellent of the Earth*. But what others counted Gain, this he counted Loss for Christ.

B 2

Not

\* *Acts* xxii. 3.† *Ibid.* xxvi. 5.

Not in the *Eminency* of his *Gifts*, nor in the *Extent* of his *Usefulness*, as a Christian Minister. He had been caught up into the third Heaven; had heard the Words of God, and seen the Vision of the Almighty; had wrought all manner of Wonders, and Signs, and mighty Deeds. —What was still more valuable, he had planted Churches, and converted Souls. His Labours were gone out into all Lands, and his Words into the Ends of the Earth. —Yet all these Acquirements, before the infinite God, were *defective*: All these Performances, in point of Justification, were *insufficient*. Therefore, in *none* of these he gloried. —Which reminds me of the second Enquiry.

2dly, In what the Apostle *did* glory. — He gloried in a Cross. Strange! What so *scandalous* as a Cross? On a Cross rebellious Slaves were executed. The Cross was execrable among Men, and accursed even by God. Yet the Apostle glories in the Cross. —Crucifixion not being used among us, the Expression does not sound

so *harsh*; neither is the Idea so *horrid*. But to the Ear of a *Galatian*, it convey'd much the same Meaning, as if the Apostle had gloried in a Halter; gloried in the Gallows; gloried in a Gibbet.

“ Stupid Creature! perhaps some may  
 “ reply, to undervalue the most substan-  
 “ tial Endowments, and glory in Infamy  
 “ itself!”—But stop a Moment, and hear  
 the Apostle farther. He glories in the  
 Cross of CHRIST, that illustrious Person,  
 who was *anointed* to be the all-instructing  
 Prophet, the all-atoning Priest, and the  
 all-conquering King of the Church.—  
 In the Cross of CHRIST JESUS; who, by  
 the Discharge of all those important Of-  
 fices, should *save* his People from the Do-  
 minion of Sin, and from the Damnation  
 of Hell.—In the Cross of Christ Jesus,  
 OUR LORD; and not ours only, but Lord  
 of All. Who doeth according to his  
 Will, in the Army of Heaven, and among  
 the Inhabitants of the Earth. *Who hath*  
*on his Vesture, and on his Thigh, a Name*  
*written, KING OF KINGS, AND*  
*LORD OF LORDS \**.

And

\* Rev. xix. 16.



And is it possible for any human Heart to contemplate the Cross of so *divine* a Being, and not to glory? Is it possible to say, *Angels, he rules over you; but he died, he died on a Cross for me; and not exult in such transporting Beneficence?*—This will be more evident, if we examine,

3dly, What *Reason* the Apostle had, to glory in the Cross of CHRIST.—The Cross, tho' in itself an ignominious Tree, yet being the Cross of CHRIST, is infinitely ennobled. It becomes the *Tree of Life*. It bears the divinest Fruit. Its Clusters are all *spiritual* and *heavenly* Blessings. Two or three of those Clusters, you will permit me to select; and may the God of all Mercy make them better than a Feast, to every humble Soul,

One Blessing is the *Pardon of Sin*. The Pardon of *all* Sin, original and actual; Sin that is remember'd, and Sin that is forgotten: Sin, however circumstanced, or however aggravated. The Pardon of all

was

was purchased by the Death of CHRIST, completely purchased; so that, against the true Believer, Sin shall never rise up in Judgment,—*shall not so much as be mentioned unto him*\*,—shall be done away, as tho' it had never been. For thus saith the Embassador of the Prince of Peace; "*Be it known unto you, Men and Brethren, that thro' this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all Things* †."—Oh my Soul! What are all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glories of them, compared with this ineffable Blessing! Yet this is but one among a Multitude.

Another Benefit, accruing from the Cross of Christ, is *Reconciliation with God*.—*When we were Enemies, we were reconciled to GOD, by the Death of his Son* ‖. Not pardoned only, but accepted; from a State of *Enmity* restored to a State of *Favour*; even that *Favour, which is better than Life* ‡.—A Privilege of such superlative

\* Ezek. xviii. 22.

‖ Rom. v. 10.

† Acts xiii. 38.

‡ Psalm lxiii. 4.

perlative Excellency, that it was celebrated in the Hymns of Angels. When the heavenly Host uttered a Song, *this* was the Subject of their harmonious Joy ; *Glory be to GOD in the Highest ; and on Earth Peace ; Good Will towards Men* \*.

“ By the Birth of this wonderful Child,  
 “ and the Death he shall sustain, Peace is  
 “ made between Heaven and Earth ; and  
 “ not Peace only, but a divine Friendship  
 “ commences. God regards the poor apostate  
 “ Race of Men, not only without  
 “ Indignation, but with Complacency and  
 “ Delight. *He rejoices over them, to do  
 “ them good* †.”

Another Benefit is *Holiness* : Or, if you please, the true, the Christian Morality.— Let none think, the Believer in JESUS disparages *true Morality*. True Morality is the Image of the blessed GOD. It is most charmingly delineated, throughout the whole Bible. It is the Beginning of Heaven in the human Soul. And its proper Origin is from the Cross of our divine Master :—For through the Merits of his Death, Sinners are made Partakers of the  
*Holy*

\* *Luke* ii. 14.

† *Deut.* xxviii. 63.



*Holy Spirit*; who writes upon their Hearts, and makes legible, in their Conversation, what was antiently written upon the Mitre of the High-Priest, HOLINESS TO THE LORD—And oh! what a *Motive* is the Cross of Christ to the Exercise of every Virtue! *He died; my Lord, my Judge, my King, died; to redeem me from all Iniquity, and make me zealous of good Works.* How powerfully, far beyond any *naked Instructions, or abstract Reasonings,* do such Considerations invite us, urge us, constrain us, to *renounce* all Ungodliness, and *adorn* the Gospel of God, our Saviour!

Another Blessing is, *Victory over Death.*—This also is the Fruit of that once detested, but now ever beloved, Tree. For thus it is written; *That, through Death, he might destroy him who had the Power of Death; that is, the Devil; and deliver them who through Fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject to Bondage\*.* The Devil is said to have the Power of Death; because, by tempting, too successfully, our first Parents, he *brought* Death into the World; because, by tempting their Posterity

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\* Heb. ii. 14, 15.

rity to Sin, and too often prevailing, he  
*arrays* Death in Horror; he *arms* Death  
 with its Sting. But CHRIST, by expiating  
 our Guilt, has disarmed this last Enemy,  
 has taken away its Sting; and made it not  
 Loss, but Gain, to die.—The *Gay*, and  
 the *Healthy*, know not how to form an  
 Estimate of this Deliverance. Nor can  
 any Words of mine describe it, with pro-  
 per Energy. Go to *dying* Beds; *there*  
 you will learn its true Worth. Ask some  
*agonizing* Friend; he, and he alone, can  
 tell you, what a Blessing it is, to have the  
 King of Terrors converted into a Messen-  
 ger of Peace.

One Blessing more I would mention,  
 and earnestly wish it to all my Hearers;  
*An Entrance into Heaven.* This too is the  
 Produce of our Redeemer's Cross.—St.  
*John* saw a bright Assembly of happy  
 Beings, clothed with white Robes, and  
 Palms in their Hands; rejoicing before  
 the Throne of GOD. *These*, said one of  
 the venerable Elders, *are they who came*  
*out of great Tribulation, and have washed*  
*their Robes, and made them white in the*  
*Blood*

*Blood of the Lamb.* THEREFORE are they before the Throne \*. They came out of great Tribulation: They suffered, it is probable, in the Service of *Christ*. Perhaps, they laid down their Lives for his Sake. But *this* was not their Passport into the Regions of Bliss. They washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb: They had applied to their own Souls, the Merits and Atonement of the crucified JESUS. By *this* Means, they were presented without Spot, and blameless. On *this* Account, they were admitted to "see the King of Heaven in his Beauty †," and to be ever, ever, with the Lord.

Since then the Cross of CHRIST was demonstrative of such stupendous Love; since it is productive of Benefits, both innumerable and invaluable; was there not a Cause, for the Apostle to glory on this Behalf? Nay, might not the very Stones have cried out, to reproach him with Insensibility and Ingratitude, if he had neg-

\* Rev. vii. 9. 14, 15.

† Isai. xxxiii. 17.



lected to glory in the Cross of CHRIST.—  
And since this Love was shewed; these  
Benefits were procured; not for *Him* only,  
but for *Us*, and for all Generations; does  
not this afford me an Opportunity of *ap-  
plying* the Doctrine to each particular  
Hearer?

1. Let me address, or rather let me con-  
gratulate, my *Brethren in the Ministry*.  
Though you cannot controul the Laws of  
Nature; though you cannot see into the  
Secrets of Futurity; you have the same  
Cause of Glorifying, with the very chiefest  
of the Apostles. A Cause of Glorifying,  
which that holy Man of God esteemed, far  
above all such miraculous Abilities. — You  
have the Cross of CHRIST,

For your *Study*, as Men:

For your *Hopes*, as Christians:

For your *Preaching*, as Ministers.

For your *Study*, as Men. Here, the  
*reasoning* Faculties may exert themselves,  
with

with everlasting Improvement, and everlasting Delight. Here, we contemplate the Wonders, the unparalleled Wonders, of a GOD made *Man*: Dying, as a Pattern of Patience; as a Martyr for Truth; as an all-perfect Sacrifice for Sin: Here, the LORD JEHOVAH hath fully granted, what his Servant *Moses* so earnestly requested; He hath made all his Glory to pass before the astonished Eyes of Angels, and of Men. Here, *Justice* has set her most awful Terrors in Array, and *Goodness* appears with the most attractive Loveliness and Beauty. Here, *Truth*, more unshaken than a Rock, takes her immoveable Stand; and *Mercy*, tenderer than the Mother's Tear, yearns with Bowels of everlasting Pity. In a word; the Cross of CHRIST is a conspicuous Theatre, on which *all* the divine Perfections unite, and harmonize, and shine forth with transcendent Lustre.

As *Christians*, we have, in the Cross of CHRIST, the *richest Provision* for our own Spiritual Wants. This is a Foundation of the sublimest *Hope*, and a Fountain

tain of the most exuberant *Joy*. This affords Matter for the deepest *Humility*, and yields Fuel for the most flaming *Love*. Faith in our crucified *JESUS*, is an ever-active Principle of the most chearful and exact *Obedience*; Is an ample and inexhaustible Magazine, from which we may fetch Arms to conquer; absolutely conquer, the Allurements of the World, the Solicitations of Flesh, and the Temptations of the Devil.—By this, a Way is opened for us into *the Holy of Holies*; and what may we not venture to ask, what may we not expect to receive, who have the Blood of the everlasting Covenant to plead, in all our Approaches to the Throne of Grace? —Having, therefore, *such* an High Priest; having, in his Cross, *unsearchable* Riches: Who shall make our glorying void? What shall hinder us from rejoicing and saying? “Blessed be God, for these opening Beauties of Spring! Blessed be God, “for the expected Fruits of Autumn! “Blessed be God, for ten thousand thousand Gifts of his indulgent Providence!” But, *above all*, blessed be God, for the Cross of *CHRIST*.

As



As *Ministers* of the Gospel, We are not left to set before our Hearers, a System of *refined Heathenism*; or to entertain them with *cold, spiritless* Lectures of Virtue. No; we have the *infinitely tender* Love, the *immensely free* Grace, of the bleeding dying IMMANUEL, to display, to improve, to enforce. And is there a Topic, in the whole Compass of Oratory, so admirably calculated, to touch the *finest Movements* of the Soul, and strike all the *inward Springs* of Action, with the most persuasive Energy?—Would we alarm the *Supine*, or intimidate the *Presumptuous*? We may call them to behold God's own Son, weltering in Blood; God's own Son, transfix'd with the Arrows of Justice. We may bid them consider; if Judgment begins with the immaculate Mediator, where shall the irreclaimable Sinner appear? How will he *escape* the Stroke, how *bear* the Weight, of God's everlasting Vengeance?—Would we comfort the *Distressed*? We may point them to an Atonement, whose Merits are infinite, and able to save to the *very uttermost*. We may lead them to a Righteousness, whose

Efficacy

Efficacy is unbounded, and sufficient to justify *the Ungodly*. And what *Balm* can be so sovereign, for a wounded Conscience?—Are we to support the *Weak*, and animate the *Doubting*? Here, we may shew them Promises; free Promises; exceeding great and precious Promises; ratified by the Oath of **JEHOVAH**, and sealed by the Blood of his Son. And what *Cordials* can be so restorative, to the drooping Christian?

In short; the Doctrine of the Cross, is suited to answer all the *great Ends* of our Ministry, and promote all the truly *valuable Interests* of our People. By this, the Holy Spirit delights to work; and this, O *Satan*, shall be thy *Plague*: This, O Sin, shall be thy *Destruction* \*. — However, therefore, the Cross might be to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* Foolishness, God, forbid, that we should glory in any thing else! Let this be the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and Ending, of all our *public Ministrations*. Let Us leave

\* Hof. xiii. 14.

a Savour of this Knowledge, in every *private* Company. Let it appear, from all our Conversation; That the *Affections* of our Heart, and the *Labours* of our Life, are devoted to our adored Redeemer's Cross.—*Happy* the *People*, who are under the Care of such Ministers! and blessed the *Ministers*, who walk according to this Rule!

2. Let me exhort all *true Believers*. Those, who are *vile* in their own Eyes, and to whom CHRIST alone is *precious*.—Remember, Brethren, what is written in the Prophet: It is a Description of your State: It is a Direction for your Conduct. *In the LORD, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, shall all the Seed of Israel be justified, and in Him shall they glory* \*.

Let none say, that Religion is a *gloomy* or *uncomfortable* State: I call upon you, this Day, to *rejoice*.—Let none say, that Religion is a *mean* or *despicable* Thing: I call upon you, this Day, to *glory*; and  
D have

\* *Isai. xlv. 25.*



have the *divine* Authority for both.— You will dishonour the blessed JESUS; you will disparage his surpassing Excellency; if you do not *confide* in him, and make your *Boast* of him. CHRIST is King of Heaven; CHRIST is Judge of the World; CHRIST is GOD over all. And of *such* a Saviour shall we not glory? Yes, verily: And in all Circumstances, and on every Occasion.

Amidst your manifold *Infirmities*, glory in CHRIST. For, though he was crucified in Weakness, he hath all Power, in Heaven and Earth.—Amidst your various Failings, glory in CHRIST. For his Righteousness covers all your Imperfections; and, though deficient in yourselves, you are complete in him \*.—Under the Pressure of *Tribulations*, lift up your Heads, and glory in the Cross. Because the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Happiness, which CHRIST hath purchased with his Agonies, and will quickly bestow on his People.—

When

\* Coloss. ii. 10.

When *Death* approaches ; Death, that cuts off the Spirit of Princes, and is terrible among the Kings of the Earth ; do you still glory in the Cross. Adhering to this Banner, you may boldly say ; *O Death, where is thy Sting ? O Grave, where is thy Victory* † ?—And when that great, tremendous Day shall come, which puts an End to the whole Frame of Nature ; when that awful, that majestic Voice, is heard, which commands all the Race of *Adam* to appear at the Bar ; then, my dear Brethren in CHRIST, then also shall you glory in the Cross. When others call upon the Rocks to fall on them, and Mountains to overwhelm them ; *This* shall be your heroic Challenge : *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of GOD's Elect ? It is GOD that justifieth, who is he that condemneth ? It is CHRIST that died* \*. Then shall you enter the Harbour of eternal Rest ; not like a shipwreck'd Mariner, cleaving to some broken Plank, and hardly escaping the raging Waves ; but like some

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stately

† I Cor. xv. 55.

\* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

stately Vessel, with all her Sails expanded, and riding before a prosperous Gale.

3dly, Let me caution the *Self-righteous*; those, who more frequently think of *their own Piety*, than of *CHRIST's Obedience*; are more apt to cry out with the *Pharisee*, *I am no Extortioner, no Adulterer*; than to confess with the *Publican*, *GOD be merciful to me a Sinner*.—What shall I say to these Persons? Let me not be thought *censorious*, when my only Aim is to be *faithful*. Beware, I beseech you beware, lest you build for Eternity, not on a *Rock*, but on the *Sand*. However you may appear in *your own Sight*; before the *adorable* Majesty of the everlasting God, before the *consummate* Perfection of his holy Law, you are less than nothing, worse than nothing; you are Deficiency and Sin.—Renounce, therefore, renounce all Dependence on Self. Trust no longer in a Refuge of Lyes: Lest all your admired Attainments, at the Day of final Retribution, be like *Straw*, and *Hay*, and *Stubble*, in *Nebuchadnezzar's* burning fiery Furnace.—Imitate the blessed Penman of my



Text. Are you blameless in your external Carriage? So was he. Are you exemplary in many Points? So was he. Yet all this Righteousness he *accounted but Dung, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of CHRIST JESUS his LORD \**.

—Be this your Pattern. Write *Emptiness* upon your own Duties; *Emptiness* upon your own Works; and you shall be filled with all the *Fulness* of God your Saviour. Every other Cause of glorying will be like the Morning Cloud, or the early Dew, which *passeth away* †. But this Cause of glorying will *stand fast for evermore, as the Moon, and as the faithful Witness in Heaven* ‡.

Can I conclude, without adding a Word of Admonition to the *Wicked*? Those I mean, who are Enemies to the Cross of CHRIST; who mind earthly Things; but neither hunger nor thirst after Righteousness. My Soul remembers the Wormwood and the Gall of such a State; and cannot but tenderly pity these unhappy People.

\* *Phil.* iii. 8. † *Hof.* vi. 4. ‡ *Psalms* lxxxix. 36.

ple.—Alas! my Friends, what have *you* to glory in? The Devil and his Angels expect, ere long, to glory in your Destruction. Those malignant Fiends are eying you, as their Prey, and are impatient to begin your Torment. Great, inexpressibly great, is your Danger. The LORD Almighty open your Eyes to discern it! Nevertheless, your Case is not desperate. You may yet be *delivered*, “as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler.” Look unto the crucified JESUS. *Why* does he hang on that bloody Tree? *Why* is his Flesh rent with Irons? It is for *you*, Sinners, for *you*. That Blood is pour’d out, to cleanse *you* from Guilt. Those Wounds are sustained, to heal *your* Consciences. In that mangled Body *dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead* ||. Great, beyond Imagination great, is the Merit of those Sufferings. Why then, O! why will you die? Why will you perish for ever; who have an *all-sufficient* Propitiation in the Cross of CHRIST? Fly to this Sanctuary. Fly, before it be too late. Fly, without a Moment’s Delay. None ever perished, that fled by Faith to JESUS CHRIST.

CHRIST.—His Death shall be a *full* Satisfaction for your Iniquities. A Sense of his immensely rich Goodness shall *win* your Affections ; shall incline (what all the Threatenings of Damnation could never effect,) shall incline you, to *loath* your Sins, and to *love* his Service ; shall smooth your Path, and expedite your Progress, to the Regions of immortal Honour and Joy.

Having now, with great Plainness of Speech, addressed my Brethren in the Ministry ; having exhorted Believers ; cautioned the Self-righteous ; and warned the Wicked ; let me commend the Whole to your *serious Recollection*, and to GOD's *gracious Benediction*.—And, “ O LORD  
 “ most holy, O GOD most mighty, O  
 “ holy and merciful SAVIOUR, by thine  
 “ Agony and bloody Sweat, by thy Cross  
 “ and Passion,” let not the Word now spoken be in vain in the LORD ! *Amen*, and *Amen*.

F I N I S.



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